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Biography

Anthony Robert "Tony" Kushner was born on July 16, 1956 in Manhattan, New York. He is the son of William David Kushner and Sylvia Deutscher. His father is a clarinetist and a conductor and his mother is a bassoonist. Shortly after his birth, the family moved to Lake Charles, Louisiana, the seat of Calcasieu Parish where he spent his childhood. During high school Kushner had a reputation in policy debate, at one point going to a camp, and making it to the final rounds. Kushner moved to New York in 1974 to begin his undergraduate college education at Columbia University, where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Medieval Studies in 1978. He studied directing at New York University's Graduate School until 1984.

During graduate school, he spent the summers of 1978-1981 directing both early original works (*Masque of Owls* and *Incidents and Occurrences during the Travels of the Tailor Max*) and plays by Shakespeare (*A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*) for the children attending the Governor's Program for Gifted Children (GPGC) in Lake Charles.

Kushner's best known work is *Angels in America* (a play in two parts: *Millennium Approaches* and *Perestroika*), a seven-hour epic about the AIDS epidemic in Reagan-era New York, which was later adapted into a miniseries for which Kushner wrote the screenplay. His other plays include *Hydriotaphia*, *Slavs!: Thinking about the Longstanding Problems of Virtue and Happiness*, *A Bright Room* *Called Day, Homebody/Kabul*, and the book for the musical *Caroline, or Change*. His new translation of Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children* was performed at the Delacorte Theater in the summer of 2006 starring Meryl Streep and directed by George C. Wolfe. Kushner has also adapted Brecht's *The Good Person of Szechwan*, Corneille's *The Illusion*, and S. Ansky's play *The Dybbuk*.

In the early 2000s, Kushner began writing for film. His co-written screenplay Munich was produced and directed by Steven Spielberg in 2005. In January 2006, a documentary feature about Kushner entitled *Wrestling With Angels* debuted at the Sundance Film Festival. The film was directed by Freida Lee Mock. In April 2011 it was announced that he is currently working with Spielberg again, writing the screenplay for an adaptation of historian Doris Kearns Goodwin's book *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln.*

Kushner is a homosexual. He admits his sexual identity when he moved to New York to enter Columbia University. Kushner and his boyfriend Mark Harris held a commitment ceremony in April 2003, the first same-sex commitment ceremony to be featured in the Vows column of *The New York Times*. In summer 2008 they were legally married at the city hall in Provincetown, Massachusetts. After their marriage, they live in Manhattan, New York.

Synopsis

Angels in America Part One: Millennium Approaches focuses the stories on the different couples. The first is gay couple Louis Ironson (Louis) and Prior Walter (Prior), the second is married couple Joseph Porter Pitt (Joe) and Harper Pitt (Harper). Louis is a word processor for the Brooklyn Federal Court of Appeals. It is the same office with Joe who works as a chief clerk for Justice Theodore Wilson. Prior works occasionally as a caterer and Harper is a housewife with Valium addiction.

Prior tells Louis that AIDS has infected him after the funeral of Louis' grandmother. Louis is very surprised but he decides to take care of Prior. However, Louis soon realizes he cannot handle the fears of the disease. Meanwhile, Joe is offered by Roy Cohn, his friend who is also a successful lawyer, to work in Justice Department in Washington. Joe is interested with this offer, but Harper does not want to move to Washington.

These two couples then begin to connect. Joe meets Louis who cries for Prior in the bathroom. Louis notices that Joe is a gay, and they begin to make friendship. Harper and Prior are also meet in their mutual dream and hallucination, in which Prior reveals that Joe is a homosexual. Then, Harper asks about it to Joe. Joe denies that he is a homosexual but he says he does not know what differences it makes. Prior's illness is getting worse and he is sent to the hospital. Louis leaves Prior and Louis wants to ends their relationship. Louis has sex in Central Park at night with a man.

Meanwhile, the relationship between Joe and Louis is getting closer. Finally, Joe calls her mother who lives in Salt Lake City, Hannah, and tells her that he is a homosexual. Hannah says that Joe is being ridiculous. She plans to come to New York to fix the condition. Moreover, Joe tells Harper that he does not have sexual feeling for her. In the same scene, Louis also tells Prior that he is moving out. Prior is very desperate because being left by Louis. In the end of drama, Joe follows Louis to the Central Park, and accompanies him to go home for sex.